

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION FOR RETARDED CHILDREN

GOALS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

More than \$6,800,000 is being spent by local school districts and the state on special education for the educable retarded each year. Since 1957, when the mandatory special education act for the educable retarded was passed, the program has grown from 3,300 children served to over 9,000 pupils in every county of the state with the exception of two. Children, believed to be non-existent, have been found and served by the program in 85 counties by 728 full-time and 123 part-time teachers.

On the negative side of the ledger, only 243 districts of the 437 districts having kindergarten through twelfth grade have programs for the educable retarded. Of the 1,013 districts in our state, only 243 have any semblance of a special education program. And of these 243 districts, only 56 offer programs which could be described as a comprehensive program for all handicapping conditions. It is only in the large metropolitan districts that one finds directors of special education, psychologists, social workers, speech therapists, certified special education teachers, teachers with training in special learning disabilities, and a complete, comprehensive program of special education serving the needs of all the handicapped.

The statistics of 728 full-time teachers and 123 part-time teachers may suggest more widespread service than actually exists, because 50% of these teachers work in three counties of the state. Of the 9,000 mentally retarded children served by special education, over half are served in five counties of the state. Many of the smaller districts have enrollments which are too small to provide an adequate population base for organization and maintenance of the required range of services.

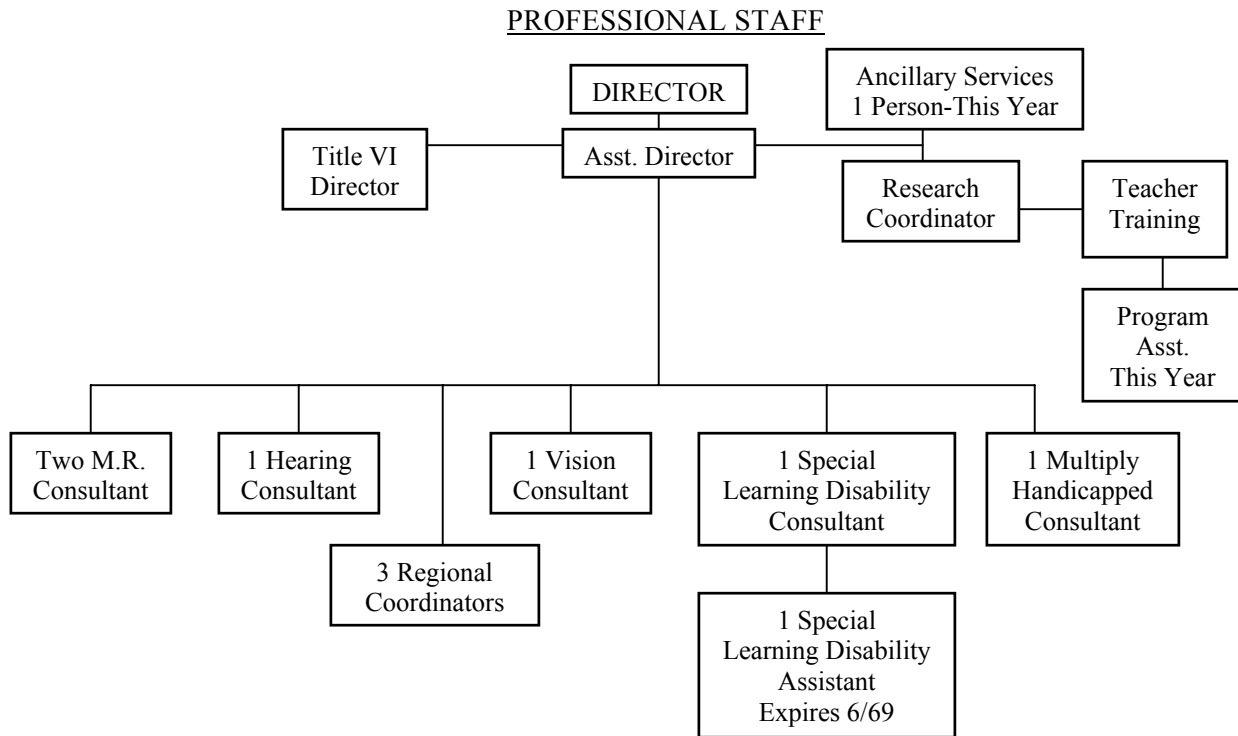
The State of Minnesota has never had mandatory education for the trainable retarded. As a result of this lack of assignment of service responsibility, we find only 69 districts in the state have special education programs for trainable retarded children. This statistic does not deal with the fact that there are 1,013 districts in our state that have responsibility for education of all the children, but

have no programs of their own, or cooperatively between districts, to meet the needs of the handicapped.

In view of the foregoing facts, the Minnesota Association for Retarded Children urges that the right of all children to an education be extended to every child in our state. To promote development of suitable services to the handicapped and help maintain their quality, we recommend that the staff for the Special Education Section be appreciably strengthened to include the additional positions requested. The Section serves some 48,000 handicapped people in our state with consultant responsibility to 6,229 full and part-time teachers. The cost of these programs involves an expenditure of more than \$25,000, 000 annually. Certainly, 17 people are not enough to plan, coordinate, and provide services for so large a responsibility. The program serves the emotionally disturbed, mentally retarded, crippled, blind, hearing impaired, and those with speech difficulties. To expect so small a staff to have the expertise to direct so diversified a program is to place upon them a burden they do not deserve.

The following chart shows the distribution and funding of the staff of the Section on Special Education. The shaded areas show those positions which are federally funded while the unshaded positions are funded out of state appropriations. One will also notice that some of the positions are temporary and expire during the year 1969. We believe this chart points up the fact that many of the positions requested by the Section on Special Education should be granted in this biennium to make the needed progress in special education.

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STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SECTION ON SPECIAL EDUCATION



Assessment of the present level of special education services in our state gives cause for serious concern. It is estimated, for example, that over 20,000 retarded children and an additional 42,000 other handicapped children have need for special education but are not receiving that specialized service to which they have a right. Where are the estimated 62,000 handicapped children who are not receiving the kind of education they need? Are they in the districts not providing any special education services? Are they located in the districts not offering comprehensive special education programs? No one really knows where these children are, or what is happening to them, since school districts are not required to report to the State Board of Education when children are not served and the reason why they are not receiving an education. We firmly believe that school districts should be required to report to the State Department of Education all children not served by their district and the reason why they are not. Until this is done, no intelligent, thoughtful planning or direction can be given to special education in Minnesota. Further, we believe that the legislature would be wise to establish an

interim commission and funds for an evaluation of the extent to which the state's special education program is meeting the goals set for the program by the 1957 legislative interim commission. Twelve years have intervened since the 1955 interim commission did its excellent work. The time has come for taking stock of the progress of the past 12 years and the direction in which we must move in the decade to come.

Of the monies spent for special education, only 35% have come from state aids to the districts. The districts cannot begin to develop the personnel, class rooms, and special equipment needed to meet their obligation in this area. The state aid formula to special education was designed to compensate for the higher cost involved in educating a handicapped child. The present \$4,400 ceiling on personnel severely restricts districts in employing the highly trained personnel needed to effectively teach the handicapped. The Department feels that the ceiling should be raised to at least 80% of salary based on a state average. This 80% aid formula would go far in correcting a lack of statewide special education services.

To re-emphasize a fact previously made: services to the retarded are not fully developed throughout the state. We believe that every child who can benefit from education and training has a right to such training and education. Until the staff of the Special Education Section is appreciably strengthened, the state aid formula revised to 80%, mandatory legislation passed insuring every child's right to an education, and mandatory reporting of children not served by the school system made law, it is unlikely that we shall see too much improvement in this area.

Staff Positions Requested by the Section on Special Education

Speech and Language Consultant - 1 Position

The Consultant position in Speech and Language is a complement position that was available to the Department of Education upon the passage of the Special Education Laws in 1957. The position was lost to the Section after re-classification in October, 1967 when the incumbent, Mr. Gerald Anderson, was elevated to the rank of Assistant Director.

This is the largest program in special education in terms of numbers of children served. The Speech position not only makes heavy demands because of the extent of workload on the consultant (22,200 pupils served - 414 full-time therapists) but a very high degree of competence and skill is necessary in handling the responsibilities of the assignment.

There are new concepts in the field at the present time which address to the integrative and cognitive process in the early development of language in children that have implications for major shift in focus of the program. This fact helps underscore the need for expert consultation to school districts and related agencies so there will continue to be orderly development in speech and language programs for handicapped children throughout the state. Therefore, in consideration of the urgency cited above, a strong request is made for a full-time consultant.

Special Learning Disabilities - 1 Position

The state's program for children with subtle neurological or behavioral disturbances has perhaps more implication for solution of learning problems in children than any of the special education programs currently in operation. The learning disabilities program served approximately 5,000 children in 67 school districts this past year and is mushrooming in growth. The Section is unable to satisfy consultation demands in the form of telephone and written communications and requests for field visitations. No consultant is available to aid those school districts attempting to take a leadership role in provision of quality service in this area which is the most rapid growing in special education.

School districts are increasingly involved in operation of programs for these children but are frustrated by the complexities in properly identifying the child or the skill necessary in isolating the components of diagnosis and remediation, both of which have implications for training of staff and expert program supervision. Since this program is in its developmental phase, it is obvious that it will immediately require the attention of no less than one full-time consultant. This program has been identified as an area of major priority in the ESEA,

Title VI State Plan where a plea has been made for state leadership.

Consultant for School Psychology and School Social Work - 2 Positions

As a result of statutes relating to handicapped children, the Special Education Section is charged with providing leadership and direction to the state's program of School Social Work and School Psychological Services. School Psychologists and School Social Workers comprise an integral and vital component in case finding, diagnosis, planning, remediation, and treatment, and should be routinely available for assignment to special education programs in order for the comprehensive program needs of handicapped children to be met. However, at the present time there are only 111 full-time psychologists and 50 full-time social workers that are in reimbursable positions in working with the handicapped pupils in the state (42,500 children served).

Over the years, the Section has developed standards governing the utilization of these personnel in school programs and has approved the psychologists and social workers for special state aid.

However, public schools currently operating special education programs are requesting direct consultation from the Section by a person trained in each of these specific areas. There are major demands from the schools and difficult questions raised including such present concerns as realistic certification standards, proper role and utilization of personnel, development of auxiliary aids and lesser trained assistants, etc. State leadership is urgently needed to assist school districts in:

- a. promoting and developing school social work and school psychological services for handicapped children.
- b. interpreting and giving direction to the broad role of the school in cooperating with all related community agencies having responsibility for handicapped children, and
- c. complying with requests from school personnel, parents, community agencies and service organizations for detailed assistance in properly diagnosing, evaluating, and planning instruction and services for handicapped children.

Consultant for Multiple Handicapped - 1 Position

Because of the current emphasis on providing quality special education to handicapped children, there has been a correspondingly greater demand for services for the multiple handicapped child. The definition of multiple handicaps suggests the presence of several handicaps in a child which cut across disability categories and presents a broad range of very difficult learning problems which require unique educational management.

The special Education Section has been assigned the responsibility for aiding school districts in developing programs for these children, but the complexity of this program requires that the consultant have unique skills, a very special background of preparation, and broad educational experience. At present, the Section has no one on its staff with these capabilities and the availability of programs and facilities for these children lags significantly behind the demand. For example, in the case of children with cerebral palsy, there are presently available only five public school programs in the state, including the residential facility of the Worthington Public Schools. The waiting list for these programs is so high that it results in a significant delay in educational placement for children.

It is difficult to estimate the numbers of multiple handicapped children in Minnesota, because many are misassigned to the state's institutions, trainable classes, daytime activity centers or, in many cases, are simply left at home on what are best described as stopgap programs of home instruction. This unfortunate situation will continue to exist until the State Department of Education can provide dynamic leadership to Minnesota's neglected population of multiple handicapped children and stimulate the development of additional facilities and services.

Consultant for Delinquent and Socially Maladjusted - 1 Position

There is a most urgent need to exert leadership to school districts which provide educational services to delinquent and maladjusted children in public schools, as required

under the state's Special Education Statutes, or to those children who are temporarily assigned to state, county, or private institutions and boarding homes.

Children in detention centers are processed by the courts and recommended for extended treatment in the various correctional facilities or sent home for probationary periods. These children often have educational problems based in part on their inability to cope with the powerful forces that shape social behavior patterns and annually channel hundreds of school age handicapped children to the state's correctional facilities.

Adequate educational facilities are needed both in the home school district or while children attend the residential facility. The State Department of Education has no leadership personnel available in the Special Education Section to cope with the problem presented to schools in meeting the special educational needs of these children. School districts are often not aware of appropriate and effective means of coping with the distressing behavior of these students nor have they developed adequate means of diagnosis and remediation. They may not be aware of the role and responsibility of the school in providing programs of instruction and services to these children and in relating to appropriate community agencies which are also charged with responsibilities for handicapped children. Nor do adequate educational services exist in the institutional programs despite rather extensive efforts in the institutional facilities, including new projects provided through the auspices of the Title I Office (P. L. 89-313).

The Special Education Section has provided services to school districts operating state aided programs and has encouraged contracts between school districts and certain correctional facilities. However, there has been limited experimentation for improved programs. A full-time program consultant at the State Department level is necessary before major advances can be made.

Consultant - Trainable Retarded - 1 Position

Minnesota has a permissive education law for its approximate population of 8,500 trainable children, less than one-eighth of whom are presently in public school classes. The program for trainable children is one of our more costly special education programs and is somewhat difficult to plan for and administer. Only five classes in the state, for example, are designed for older, adolescent children (ages 14-21).

The Special Education Section has attempted to cover the area of trainable by utilizing its present complement of two consultants in mental retardation and has provided significant consultation to school districts in setting up programs. At the present time, there are over 100 districts operating programs for 1, 000 trainable children. However, it is impossible to adequately cover the field of trainable as it now exists nor make substantial gains in service to the remainder of the population without a full-time trained consultant assigned to this area. There are, at this time, two items of particular concern which we feel unable to resolve:

1. Approximately one-third of the present teachers do not have adequate preparation to give them minimum background to conduct classes, yet the Special Education Section is unable to regularly devote effort to help offset this lack of training. For example, there are no State Department manuals or resource guides to aid teachers.
2. Minnesota's permissive law has not served our trainable children as well as it might have with stronger State Department leadership. Relatively few children are in trainable classes, many are inappropriately placed in Department of Public Welfare Daytime Activity Centers, and more are at home without service or have been institutionalized for lack of community services. We are now faced with a request for mandatory legislation which school districts, by and large, are not prepared to deal with. It seems almost

imperative that strong state leadership be exerted in this area of disability so that adequate contacts and appraisals can be made in the field and sound recommendations and planning can be effected.

State Regional Consultants - 4 Positions

The number of handicapped children served in Minnesota has increased from 13,000 in 1957 to over 45, 000 in 1967 with 60,000 anticipated by 1975. However, enrollment is only one factor suggesting the extent of problems presented to the Special Education Section in providing assistance and leadership to the state's program for special education.

A strong central office staff with a high level of expertise on educational needs of the various disability groups of children is essential, but it cannot unilaterally provide the extent of services to school districts and other agencies that is requested. We feel that new patterns of special education service are required, and it is suggested that a plan for extending the leadership arm of the State Department to the tentatively defined regions of the state as outlined by the State Planning Office is now necessary.

By providing direct consultation and service to the outlying regions by personnel actually housed in the region, more frequent consultation would be possible than were these persons housed in St. Paul; in addition, there would be established an element of closeness and awareness of problems peculiar to a given area which would place the State Department in a position of much greater receptivity to local area needs.

Regional educational efforts are developing at the grass roots level in Minnesota with the Education Research and Development Councils anxious to extend their activities to include regional service potential.

It would perhaps be advantageous to the State Department to encourage further exploration of wide region consultation so that the State Department, the school districts, as well as the ERDC Units can systematically develop the most suitable plan for the children in Minnesota.

Emphasis in the Title VI ESEA State Plan cites the need for an extensive population base, approximately 20,000 students, so that adequate educational administrative mechanisms or systems can develop and thus provide for appropriate instructional and service programs for handicapped children. We would like to establish an initial exploration effort to develop sufficient contact between the State Special Education Office and local school districts and agencies so that attention can be given to developing the systems referred to above. Therefore, the Section presently requests the addition of four consultants well trained in all areas of special education programs to help establish a reasonable plan of "wide-region" consultation in conjunction with the present administration from the Central Office Special Education Section. Although ultimately we may need to establish a regional outpost in each of the state's seven presently defined regions with sufficient staff to properly provide services within the region, experience is necessary in a more limited way, prior to such development.

Present plans call for an orientation period in the St. Paul Office where regional staff members would have broad exposure to the entire Special Education operation. During that time, there would be periodic contacts with four rural regions approximating a 20 county area with boundaries coterminous when possible with those which will finally be recommended by the State Planning Office and acceptable to the State Board of Education. After orientation, the consultants would be assigned to geographic regions of the state.

It is imperative, if handicapped children are to be properly served in Minnesota, that broad and basic relationships are established with those public and private agencies within the region that must help support and complement the state's program of Special Education Instruction and Services. Other state agencies with well-established services for handicapped children are already serving in a regional capacity throughout the state. Mental Health Centers, District Rehabilitation Offices, Crippled Children's Services, Health Services, etc. are non-educational agencies that have important services for handicapped children. However, in this regard, they will never achieve their full service potential until the missing discipline of Special Education is well represented and equitably available in all regions of the state.

Consultant in Program Evaluation and Research - 1 Position

With heavy investment of money and effort in the state special education program, prompted by the passage of federal legislation {ESEA 89-10, as amended), there has developed a corresponding need to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of these efforts.

The Special Education Section is currently operating a pilot research and evaluation project which will be terminated at the end of fiscal 1969. This project has as its director a Research Coordinator who works with public schools and other related agencies and colleges in evaluating their special education programs and developing research projects. The consultant will work closely with school districts to aid them in building strong evaluation efforts into all of their Title VI and Title III Special Education Projects. The results of these evaluations will provide direction for the development of similar programs in new settings, if warranted.

The findings to date in this pilot project clearly indicate the advantages to the State Department for permanently establishing such a position in the Section so that maximum program quality can be achieved and greater special education research effort stimulated in the public schools in Minnesota.

Consultant-Educable Retarded - Work Study Programs - 1 Position

Mandatory programs for educable retarded now serve approximately 8,400 children, or roughly 50% of those who are eligible. The great percentage of these children can be expected to have good long-range potential for employment and success in the community after the completion of an appropriate secondary program. However, only 25% of those enrolled in the special programs (approximately 2,200) are at the junior high and senior high levels. Apparently, the majority of secondary youngsters are early dropouts or are absorbed in the mainstream curriculum without sufficient consideration which so often leads to discouragement and failure.

A new and significant approach to working with these youngsters in the public schools has been initiated in the past few years. There are 241 full-time secondary special class programs in 120 districts. Approximately 20 of these districts have employed some 30 DVB authorized personnel to work in conjunction with the school, the employment market, and related agencies to help insure work experience while the child is still attending secondary school classes. In addition, the 20 employing districts have extended these services to surrounding schools. This new approach with handicapped children is not restricted to mental retardation and should be available routinely to all secondary handicapped children, as needed. However, the program desperately needs leadership at the public school level, particularly in its present developmental stages. Program growth seems to have great potential based on the number of secondary programs currently operating.

As of now, there are no specific program or resource guides from the special Education Section relating to overall secondary programs. At the present time, no teacher training institution in Minnesota is equipped to provide suitable training for either secondary special class teachers or the specialized DVR personnel required. The present consultants (2) in mental retardation are unable to provide more than token effort to the entire work-study curriculum. One additional consultant position could manage the present workload in this area and give thrust to the new developmental phases of the program.

Pre-School and Parent Consultation - 1 Position

The 1967 legislature enabled school districts to provide for the instruction and related educational services to pre-school handicapped children and their parents. This legislation has already helped provide limited programs to some of the identified 300 profoundly deaf pre-school children in the state. However, there was no legislative complement provided for a program consultant and the pre-school program is able to progress only as fast as the hearing consultant in the Section can devote leadership time to this effort.

The present legislation has been written broadly to cover all pre-school handicapped children in the state (although by agreement, programs for the first biennium are restricted to the hearing impaired). There is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that when handicapped children receive early training in pre-school years, this will offset the disability to a significant degree.

Rationale to support programs for all pre-school handicapped children needing such service will need further definition before additional money will be authorized by the legislature. Thus it seems evident that programs for most handicapped pre-school children will not develop until more leadership is available than currently exists in the Special Education Section. Meanwhile, funds available for pre-school programs from Title VI ESEA will not be expended because of the lack of program guides and standards for program controls. This is ironic as there is a heavy emphasis on pre-school programs in the Title VI State Plan.

There are currently estimated to be over 15,000 handicapped pre-school children in the state who could benefit from specific pre-school programs and services. In order to achieve uniform program development at the pre-school level, we request one consultant position to begin work in this most critical area.

Consultant - Seriously Emotionally Disturbed - 1 Position

A request was made to the 1963 legislature for a complement position for a special education consultant to give direction to education programs for emotionally disturbed children. Because the request for the position was not approved, the Department of Education agreed that a request could be made to the Department of Public Welfare to establish the position in that Department and finance from Federal Mental Health funds.

Tentative plans at that time included the possibility of transferring the position to the Department of Education at a later date. (The consultant who assumed this role was housed and supervised in the Special Education Section with responsibility to the Department of

Public Welfare and the Department of Education.) The position is no longer available to us, and we request a program consultant to help school districts meet their responsibilities for emotionally disturbed children under the special education statutes.

This employee, acting as a liaison person, would help determine and establish effective lines of communication between school districts, mental health centers, state institutions for the mentally ill and the mentally retarded, county welfare agencies, and other public and private agencies and organizations with responsibility to emotionally disturbed children.

He would make recommendations for state standards that would promote continuity in planning among agencies for appropriate educational programs as well as function as a resource for the State Department in providing consultative services to school districts.

Clerk Typists - 7 Positions

The existing ratio of professional staff to clerical staff is 2:1. If the consultant staff is increased by 15 members, the Section would need six Clerk Typists and one Clerk Steno in order to maintain this ratio.

Program Specialist - Mental Retardation - 1 Position

There is a patent need in the Special Education Section for a person with in-depth knowledge and experience in all educational related phases of mental retardation to coordinate this rapidly expanding program. The state is currently reimbursing over 1,000 special classes for the retarded student. The quality of this program is in part dependent on sound leadership from the State Department of Education, including surveillance of the many interrelated facets, to insure maintaining continuity from primary level classes through the secondary work-study programs.

The present consultants in the mental retardation program area in the Section, as well as that consultant currently being requested, represent specific levels of expertise and each is primarily responsible for an individual component of the total program in mental retardation.

Consequently, detailed coordination and planning between the various programs for the retarded has too often fallen on the Director of Special Education or the Assistant Director, neither of whom should have this specific assignment or, in fact, have the necessary background for this task. Temporary coordination responsibilities have been assigned to the senior consultant in retardation, but this was conceived as an emergency measure and is not considered a solution to the problem. The present circumstances definitely impede the overall thrust of program development in mental retardation.

In further expression of this concern, we feel it is absolutely necessary to coordinate responsibilities and maintain continuous contacts with the various parent groups, commissions, committees, and planning groups that are organized to promote programs and services to retarded children. This function alone places a great demand on the time of the Director and Assistant Director, yet cannot be properly handled at the individual consultant level. These responsibilities should be assigned to one individual who is in a coordinating role if continuity in planning and development is to be assured. The need for developing detailed and supporting data and background information for legislative action as well as for the special reports that are requested in this area is sufficiently great to require the continual attention of one person who can respond to the needs of the total field of mental retardation.

In consideration of the above, we are requesting that a Program Specialist in Mental Retardation be added to the Section.

February 1969